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May 14, 1996

UM HITS THE ROAD WITH TOYOTA TO TRAIN TEACHERS

MISSOULA --

The University of Montana—Missoula will take technology training for teachers on the road throughout Montana during the next two years with a computer lab and van donated by the Toyota USA Foundation.

With faculty from UM's math department behind the keyboards and wheel, the portable laboratory's use initially will focus on training mathematics and science teachers at school districts along a 200-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 93 from Hamilton to Whitefish before branching out into other Montana school districts.

UM President George Dennison and Toyota USA Foundation representatives unveiled the project, "Taking Technology to Teachers," with a student demonstration Tuesday at Target Range School, where sixth-graders used maps from Internet databases to continue their study of Montana geology.

The project will officially launch this week with a workshop for teachers in Lewistown.

Beginning this summer, more than 300 K-12 teachers in the Missoula area and the Flathead, Mission and Bitterroot valleys will be trained in technology-based math and science with the van's state-of-the-art lab that includes multimedia and World Wide Web capabilities. Teachers eventually will integrate what they learn into their classroom instruction to better prepare students for college.

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The Toyota USA Foundation provided \$100,000 through the UM Foundation's ongoing capital campaign to start the teacher training program and support travel and expenses during the designated training period. A \$25,000 grant from Microsoft Corp. paid for multimedia equipment, supplies and software and licensing of additional Microsoft software for development and teaching.

"This recognition and support from the Toyota USA Foundation will enable the University to extend its resources to assist the public schools in the development of Montana's educational system," said Dennison.

Lynn Churchill, research associate professor of mathematics, and Mike Lundin, adjunct assistant professor of mathematics and professional development co-chair for the Systemic Initiative for Montana Mathematics and Science Project, proposed the training center to the Toyota USA Foundation last summer. The two, along with UM colleagues from SIMMS and the Six Through Eight Mathematics and Reach For The Sky projects will provide teacher training.

Many of the sites for the portable technology training project will be drawn from schools already working with UM faculty through SIMMS, STEP and RFTS.

"We'll be going into more places more often with a well-defined work environment to help train teachers in a more effective and efficient way," Churchill said.

The organizers have found that schools want to integrate technology-enhanced instruction, but they don't always have the facilities or experience necessary to put such programs in place.

Churchill said teachers will require a long-term training period before they can integrate technology into their classroom instruction.

Several courses will be provided for teachers in the targeted regions over the next two years

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and will introduce ways to access educational resources, professional communication and support through electronic mail, bulletin boards and the World Wide Web; use of software, CD-ROM resources to facilitate and augment math and science instruction; and use of graphing calculators in the classroom.

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